

they have rendered in giving a real impetus to county society visitation programs. Thanks are due also to state councilors who have joined with President Peers and Association Secretary Warnshuis, and to the county society officers who have aided them to make these visits take on a helpful force; the influence of which will be felt, in good fellowship and professional ways, for years to come.

So successful has been this comparatively recent work that, from now on, county society visitation, carried on along carefully outlined plans, will be considered a definite responsibility of each year's organization program, and one to which the Association's president, councilors and officers may be counted on to give generously of their best efforts. Through such coöperative endeavors, the California Medical Association and its component county medical societies are more certain than ever to realize achievements in scientific and organized medicine, which they have set for themselves. Once again, thanks to all who have had a part in making the visitation conferences of President Peers' administration so successful.

ON THIS AND THAT

Proceedings of the County Secretaries' Conference.*—The minutes of the conference of State Association Officers and County Society Secretaries, held in San Francisco on January 18, are printed in this issue and will be found on page 210.

Members of the California Medical Association who desire to know more about the work of the parent state organization will find these stenographic reports of speeches and discussions of considerable interest; and as they learn of the intricacy of duties and problems, it may be hoped that some of the supposed mystery surrounding the work of state officers will fall away.

Advantages of Conferences.—Among the great advantages resulting from the secretarial conference, and of the county society visitations, are these: the workers in the State Association and the county societies are thus provided with an opportunity to meet one another face to face, and to explain their respective points of view or doubts; and through discussion of the best methods of procedure, to unite on plans of action, in which all effort is directed toward one harmonious end. The California Medical Association in recent years has expended many thousands of dollars which might still be in the Association's treasury, had it been possible, through preliminary conferences, to come to a common understanding on some of the matters which seemed to take on such paramount importance that immediate action apparently was necessary.

* For previous references, see February issue, pages 74 and 117.

This fact is here mentioned not to criticize but simply to emphasize how valuable conferences may become to an organization, if through a free and leisurely exchange of opinion and discussion, hasty and expensive procedures may be reduced to a minimum.

The state and county officers, who attended the January 18 secretarial conference, gladly put in an entire day educating and rededicating themselves to the welfare of the California Medical Association and its component county societies. Perhaps you, kind reader, may also care to know on what topics the time was thus spent by those officer-colleagues, who gladly left their professional work, in the hope of learning how better to aid one another and you, in battling to advantage for the aims which scientific and organized medicine have mapped out for themselves, and to which the members of the California Medical Association are pledged.

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Coronado Annual Session, Monday, May 25, to Thursday, May 28: List of San Diego Hotels; Prompt Reservations Necessary.—The opening paragraph of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE for February called the attention of readers to this year's annual session headquarters hotel—the Hotel del Coronado—and the fact that only twenty-five rooms had not been applied for. The hotel now reports a full reservation of all rooms.

However, on page 209, Association Secretary Warnshuis gives the names of other hotels in San Diego, and announces, also, that a ten-minute ferry service will be in operation from San Diego to Coronado Island. Members who wish to be sure of accommodations should promptly write to one of these San Diego hotels. Every effort is being made to anticipate the desires of visiting members; but those who hope to get superior hotel accommodations, without making reservations in ample time, are apt to be disappointed.

In next month's issue will appear the program of this year's annual session, and the urge to attend the meetings will then again be in evidence. Associated, as are the excellent scientific program and the social features, with the exhibits at the San Diego Exposition, all signs point to a very large attendance. To play safe, make your reservations now.

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Attorney-General's Opinion on Division of Pathologic and Radiologic Services into Professional and Technical Fields.—In the department for Letters, on page 243, will be found the opinion of Attorney-General U. S. Webb, through Deputy Lionel Browne, in reply to a communication from Director Walter M. Dickie of the California State Board of Health, relative to the interpretation of certain sections of the 1935 non-profit hospital law known originally as Assembly Bill 246, and now on the code books as Chapter

386, Statutes of 1935. Under that law certain responsibilities were placed upon the California State Board of Health, and Director Dickie's communication was a request to the Attorney-General for clarification.

The legal principles involved in the interpretation of laws are well exemplified in this statute. The State Board of Health must govern itself by the opinions of the State's Attorney-General, unless such opinions are overruled by the proper courts. In the present instance, Deputy Browne points out the difficulties involved in having the office of the Attorney-General render an opinion on an abstract proposition, when, as a matter of fact, some of the legal points must be settled by the courts on separate and specific cases, and then only "upon a consideration of all the facts adduced and of the law applicable thereto." The letter of Deputy Browne, printed on page 243, should be read, not only by members of the profession associated with the specialties mentioned, but by all physicians who seek to orient themselves on the medical-legal principles under discussion.

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Roster for 1935.—The roster of membership of the California Medical Association for the year 1935, with additions and changes of membership up to the date of printing of the March CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, is given place on the opening pages of this number. During the last several years, the Council has been printing the State Association roster in condensed form to provide members with a list which they could easily check with the additional information to be found in the Directory of the California State Board of Medical Examiners. The publication of the roster in this new form, as a part of the official JOURNAL, means a saving in printing expense of more than one thousand dollars.

Last year's roster was printed in CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE of September, 1935. It is gratifying to note, that in spite of the hard times, there has been no decrease in State Association membership. And further, that in the largest county unit of the State—in Los Angeles—where the application fee must be accompanied by a one hundred dollar pledge, this fee has not been a deterrent in securing new members; an indication of what a headquarters building and broad society activities can do for an organization. Let us hope that the coming year will be marked by a numerical and percentage increase in members greater than that to the credit of the last several years.

Other State Association and Component County Society News.—Additional news concerning the activities and work of the California Medical Association and its component county medical societies is printed in this issue, commencing on page 208.

EDITORIAL COMMENT†

VITAMIN D TOXICITY

Physicians, in company with the general public, have become conditioned during the past two decades to considering vitamins as "accessory food factors." The implication of this conception, which is strongly supported by extensive commercial and advertising interests, is that vitamins are completely harmless and nontoxic, even in the highest conceivable dosage. Hints to this effect are not wanting in medical literature. The recognition of the chemical constitution of vitamins A, B, C, and D during the last five years has put an entirely different complexion on the matter. It must now be recognized that vitamins are drugs and that, in common with all drugs, they do have a definite toxicity in high enough dosage, and that there is a limit to the amount that may be used without invoking dangerous symptoms. The effective dosage of these drugs is very small. For pure crystalline vitamin D, for example, an effective daily dosage is about one-tenth of a milligram. That is, its dosage is less than any other drug now ordinarily employed. It is very important that physicians get away from prescribing vitamin D in terms of obscure units of variable biological activity, and insist that solutions or preparations of it be furnished in such a manner as to indicate clearly the percentage concentration of the pure crystalline material, so that it may be prescribed in milligrams of the pure drug.

Vitamin D has recently been recommended in high dosage in the treatment of arthritis.¹ Dreyer and Reed state that they have treated 700 patients with massive doses of vitamin D, and they admit that sixty-three showed signs of toxicity. This is a relatively high percentage of untoward reaction, and it raises the question as to whether the disease hazard justifies such a pronounced therapeutic hazard. The signs of vitamin D toxicity appear about two weeks after the high daily dosage treatment begins. The patient is nauseated, becomes dizzy, and has tingling in the extremities; and there may be vomiting, diarrhea and polyuria. A patient recently admitted to a California hospital with these symptoms, which were definitely attributed to excessive vitamin D intake, died in coma three days after admission. There is a very definite risk of clinical toxicity with vitamin D, of which all physicians should be aware.

There has been much scientific discussion of vitamin D toxicity. This has been complicated

† This department of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE presents editorial comment by contributing members on items of medical progress, science and practice, and on topics from recent medical books or journals. An invitation is extended to all members of the California and Nevada Medical Associations to submit brief editorial discussions suitable for publication in this department. No presentation should be over five hundred words in length.

¹ Dreyer, I., and Reed, C. I.: Arch. Phys. Therapy, 16: 537 (Sept.), 1935.